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EDITORIAL

The death of seven people who took extra-strength tylenol triggers a world wide scare and a hunt for the cause.

The extra-strength capsules were laced with cyanide. Cyanide is metal salts containing a carbon atom linked to a nitrogen atom. It is so toxic that 50 milligrams—a fraction of a teaspoon—can kill in as little as 15 minutes. Cyanide doses kill by disrupting the blood's ability to carry oxygen through the body, affecting the heart, lungs, and brain.

As deadly as cyanide is, it is not hard to get it. All you have to do is find a supplier and they'll send it out to you the same cyanide found in the capsules is also used in the manufacture of PCP, or more commonly known as "Angel Dust."

When the industries electroplate, that is the hardening of steel and the extraction of gold and silver from low-grade ores, employ sodium and potassium cyanide. Also medical and scientific laboratories regularly use potassium cyanide.

When the makers of Tylenol were questioned they said that they kept some cyanide on hand at the plants. They used the cyanide in chemical tests that ensure the absence of lead in the main ingredient in Tylenol. The McNeil company also keeps cyanide in small amounts at the laboratory but is separated from the manufacturing process. Only the employs can have access to the cyanide.

You can see how easy it is to get cyanide, but how did it get into the Tylenol and why?

Since they do not know how the cyanide got into the capsules, they warned people, nation-wide, not to take extra-strength Tylenol capsules until further notice.

Police don't know if it is happening at the plants, somewhere on the delivery chain, or right in the stores. Since it could be happening right in the stores, the managers have been pulling Tylenol off the shelves.

The seven deaths made many people panic. They threw all their Tylenol away as well as other drugs. Many people stopped buying Tylenol and many took their bottles back to the store and asked for a refund.

The tampering of the Tylenol traced back to two different plants. This made the police think that it was happening during the shipping of the products or at the stores. Since all of the deaths have occurred in Chicago, investigators think that it is being done individually instead of at the plants.

Many experts thought it was unlikely that any tampering occurred along the distribution chain, since packages of Tylenol are "Shrink-Wrapped" in plastic in groups of six at the factory, and individual bottles before they reached retail stores would be readily apparent from the broken wrapping.

The most likely theory was that someone had simply removed individual bottles from retail stores—selected, perhaps, at random—filled a few capsules with the deadly poison, and sneaked them back onto the shelves for unsuspecting consumers to buy. If this is true, anyone could be doing it. An ex-employee,

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